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OF THE

Greatest Literary Curiosity of the Age.

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Ex. Gov. John A. Dix says: "I have watched it in its progress with great interest, and a high appreciation of its great value. Fifty years from this time it will, undoubtedly, have a value which cannot be estimated—as indeed it has now."

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Rev. Henry W. Bellows says: "It seems to me almost a providential felicity that such a curious and unique record exists."

Col. Duncan K. McRae of the late Confederate Army, says:—"Its fairness, impartiality and completeness cannot be too highly extolled"

CONGRESS.

The *Washington Chronicle* said:—"There is not an hour, during a session of Congress, when some fact, to confirm history or refute misrepresentation, is not found necessary, and the difficulty of finding a plan, to which immediate and reliable reference can be had, is constantly felt. This work supplies that important desideratum."



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NEW YORK :

NATHAN LANE, Stationer and Printer, 69 Wall Street.

1876.

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SOCIETY LIBRARY BUILDING,

67 University Place,

NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR:

BY special request of well known citizens, the subscriber takes pleasure in presenting for your consideration a brief statement concerning the importance of one of the most notable historical productions in the world—known as “TOWNSEND’S LIBRARY OF NATIONAL, STATE AND INDIVIDUAL RECORDS,” for the decade ending 1870—comprising a collection of historical records concerning the origin, progress and consequences of our late civil war, such as has never been made by the industry of any other man—equal in magnitude to one thousand volumes of ordinary octavo size, and quite as remarkable in its way as the extraordinary contest which it depicts. “It is a work of peculiar interest,” said the New York *Evening Post*, “in that it is the *first* attempt ever made to collect and arrange for the convenient use of future historians the record of great events as given from day to day during their occurrence, in the newspaper press.”

“The newspapers,” said Carlyle, “constitute the essence of all history.” They are the mirrors in which events show themselves in their very form and pressure. In his history of the French

Revolution and of Frederick the Great, Carlyle has shown with what magnificent effect details may be used by the great historical artist. It is not always that which appears to us momentous at the time that stands the test. Really significant events are seldom estimated at their true value by those who witness them, while that which seems for the time being all-important turns out to be eventually hollow and mere blatant vacuity after all. Turn over the files of the American journals cotemporary with the Revolution of 1776, and you will see the value of the living records of the times. The Hon. John C. Hamilton, in a letter to a friend commendatory of Mr. Townsend's work, said: "In preparing my 'History of the Republic of the United States,' I was, excepting the few papers of my father's during the period which elapsed between 1782 and '88, chiefly indebted to the newspapers for the materials of the work. Unless you have been engaged in a similar labor, you could not imagine the difficulty of preparing a valuable narrative from merely documentary material."

So, in after generations, the records of the transactions of our times will be equally marvelous, and it is not too much to say that the newspapers of the present age have necessitated a new style of history.

"Where can we find greater accuracy than in the leading newspapers?" said Edward Everett. "The error which one paper makes is very speedily corrected by the others; and in this age of inquiry and debate, if Truth ever emerges from the well in which she is said to abide, it is to clothe herself in print." The Press is the mouth-piece of the people. Their aspirations, their purposes, their antipathies are the staple of its argument day by day. There is not a wave, not a ripple in the minds of the community that it does not reflect. It occupies the position of a perpetual Congress, and the measures upon which it agrees are invariably adopted before any considerable lapse of time. Were it not for the Press, how few, comparatively, of our most noted men would ever obtain celebrity; how many of the grandest scenes in our history would have been left unrecorded—scenes toward which the minds of millions in future ages will turn with patriotic reverence. When we consider the

multitudinous incidents of the decade between 1860 and 1870; when we reflect on the vast variety of important and exciting subjects included in the origin, progress and consequences of our great civil war, it will scarcely be considered exaggeration to say, that the transactions of that decade *alone* include more material for history interesting to the world than all that is recorded of the previous 240 years. Well may we remember the prophetic words of James Gallatin, uttered in the New York Chamber of Commerce in 1860, when he enthusiastically invoked his countrymen to *arouse* to the full importance of the crisis, saying that "History will make record of our proceedings, and that record will be consulted by future generations for encouragement, for instruction, and for warning through all time." And well may we also remember the last words of the gallant Winthrop, one of the earliest martyrs of the battle-field, when his patriotic spirit breathed a hope that "Some competent person would keep a careful record of events, for we were making history with lightning speed." But neither Gallatin nor Winthrop could then have formed any adequate idea of the long duration, the vast proportions and immense consequences of the war forced upon us for national self-preservation. And little could they imagine how stupendous was to be the amount of labor involved in keeping such a careful record of events. This, however, has happily been done by Mr. Thomas S. Townsend, of this city (New York), in a manner so complete and methodical, that all who in future years desire information concerning individuals or events in any way connected with or incidental to the Rebellion, will be enabled to find it as readily as a banker consults his accounts. On the 7th of November, 1874, the venerable William Cullen Bryant said: "The age has given birth to few literary undertakings which will bear comparison with Mr. Townsend's work for extent and importance. The compiling of a lexicon in any language is nothing to it. The forty Academicians who compiled the Dictionary of the French Language were engaged in a far less laborious work than this of Mr. Townsend's, which is a library in itself."

Mr. Townsend is fairly entitled to the credit of being the *first* to demonstrate the unequalled importance of the Press, as a source of historical truth, by rescuing its boundless treasures

from their ephemeral exposure, and preserving and adopting them to the needs of the investigator.

Such a work will lengthen the lives of the great men of the future, by rendering unnecessary the immense waste of time which the want of ready and reliable information has hitherto imposed on historical writers. "The Rebellion has caused the production of more books than any other event in the history of the world, said the *Evening Post*. "The amount of paper and print that has been consumed in the issue of the different volumes and pamphlets upon the military, social and political aspects of our civil strife, is immense, and copies have been sown broadcast throughout the land; but when the time shall have arrived for the production of an impartial and dispassionate history of the war, it is *not to these works* that the historian will be likely to look for his facts, but rather to the narrative of occurrences as they appeared in the columns of the daily press. To arrange and classify ready for use the material he will there find, would be so great a labor, that it would alone be enough to deter many from entering upon the task."

It is difficult to conceive that any private citizen could have been found bold enough to undertake the task, and enthusiastic and brave enough to persevere amid extraordinary difficulties in forming such a Record as Mr. Townsend has done; far surpassing anything of the kind that the British Museum, the Bibliotheque Imperial of Paris, or any other library in the world can ever possess.

"I do not believe," said the Rev. Henry W. Bellows, "that another man competent to this task could have been found in the country, who would have given so many years of his life to this undertaking, and I make bold to say that it will never be done again, and that Mr. Townsend's peculiar personality is the main reason why it is done now, and can alone account for the existence of the Record. It seems to me almost a providential felicity that such a curious and unique record exists."

Ex. Governor Dix testifies to its importance as follows: "I have watched it in its progress with great interest, and a high

appreciation of its great value. Fifty years from this time it will, undoubtedly, have a value which cannot be estimated—as indeed it has now.”

Ex. Governor Horatio Seymour says: “I look upon the work as a miracle of labor, arrangement and execution. It is not only necessary to the historian, but will be of great value to our Government in the event of war or hostile complications with other nations.”

Governor Rutherford B. Hayes, of Ohio, in a letter to Mr. Townsend, says: “Your wonderful compilation is the greatest work of the kind of which I have ever heard.”

The manner in which prominent men of *all parties* have commended the work, is the very highest testimonial to the success with which the compiler has preserved and arranged everything requisite to satisfy impartial inquirers, now and in future ages, in every State in the Union, as there is hardly a family or locality in the land for which there may not be found some records concerning the share which their respective relatives and regions took in the great contest which so long convulsed the nation, and it deserves to be preserved as a great treasure-house of history, accessible for future ages, for “it is a subject in which posterity, as well as the public of to-day” said the *New York World*, “is vitally interested.”

Never before were the annals of any country recorded with such fullness and impartiality. No better evidence of which can be desired than is afforded by the testimony of Col. Duncan K. McRae of the late Confederate Army, and for some time agent for the Confederate Government in Europe. Col. McRae says in a letter of March 15, 1876, “I regard Mr. Townsend’s work as one of wonderful value. It really contains a better source of supply for a history of the war than simply the official records, for he has many (the minutest often of those) and in addition his cotemporaneous journalistic narrative, data and statistics, worked up with such elaborate and systematic method and detail, affords every facility for accurate history. Its fairness, impartiality and completeness cannot be too highly extolled.” The system upon which it is prepared, is so philosophic and comprehensive, that

the best critics in the land have expressed their admiration. The novelty of the plan, its admirable arrangement for ready reference evinces a degree of genius, as well as of patient, sagacious and persevering labor that should secure for the compiler a degree of appreciation and of pecuniary recompense commensurate with the unique and important service he has rendered to the truth of history and to the annals of his country.

THE RECORD

was commenced on the 1st of December, 1860, and is completed to December 1st, 1870, and numbers nearly one hundred volumes, of 600 pages each, embracing as much printed matter as could be placed in about one thousand volumes of ordinary octavo size; and if the columns, which number four to a page, were arranged in a continuous line, they would measure 75 miles. Each volume of the RECORD contains everything relating directly or indirectly to the great conflict that has appeared in the *New York Herald, Times, Tribune, World, Daily News, Express, Commercial, Post, Boston Journal*, and other newspapers, for one month, arranged in chronological order. The volumes are handsomely bound in calfskin, and labeled with the year, month and number of each. The RECORD comprises everything—not merely down to the end of battle-fields, but to the close of the equally important strife connected with the re-organization of the Union by the re-admission of the Seceded States in 1870; and it also includes whatever relates to matters *connected with the decade ending 1870*, that has appeared up to this time (1876).

It is essential to remember that an immense mass of information concerning the origin, progress and consequences of the war, and of individuals prominent in public affairs during that period, has been attainable only since the close of the war, as it has been elicited by discussions in Congress, in historical societies, in controversies between persons engaged on both sides, in contributions to magazines by persons who were prominent in various positions, and in the copious extracts by the Press from Sherman's Memoirs and other publications. Proper regard for the truth of history—for justice to all sides—renders it indispensable that all such matters should be fully included in the RECORD.

There has not been a topic discussed, nor has an occurrence transpired of the slightest national moment, whereof the RECORD does not contain almost every account which may have been published at the time, or has appeared concerning it up to 1876. The preparation of this RECORD, in a mechanical point of view, is a wonder of manipulation and skill, and affords a collection of material far surpassing, in point of convenience for handling, to bound files of papers, yet of *comparatively* little utility *alone* for actual service.

Gigantic as the undertaking was to collect and arrange the vast mass of material in the volumes of the Record, it was the least laborious portion of the work—only one-tenth of the time of the compiler having been occupied upon it, while nine-tenths have been devoted to the ENCYCLOPÆDIA, which is an analysis of, and guide to the contents of this immense collection. To study the history of any particular subject by means of the RECORD alone would be impossible. Therefore, in order to make this great mass of information available, the compiler decided that the *mercantile principle of keeping accounts was the true one*—to regard his RECORD in the light of a merchant's day-book, then to journalize the contents of the RECORD, and from the *journals* to redistribute the entries to their appropriate departments in what a merchant would call his ledger, but which the compiler calls the ENCYCLOPÆDIA. To journalize the contents of the RECORD requires a volume of 600 pages, to comprise an epitome of *each* of the one hundred volumes of the RECORD.

Every event of the struggle, however minute, every fact, statement, assertion or opinion in a speech, letter, report or editorial is separately entered from the RECORD into these Journals, with references to volume, page and column of the RECORD where they may be found. The RECORD therefore, is the grand reservoir of information—the Journals serve as the medium for condensing and grouping the contents of the RECORD and collecting the material for the *preparation of the Encyclopædia*. After the entries are systematically transferred to the various departments in the Encyclopædia, the Journals have served their purpose, and are of no further use.

THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

We now come to the most important part of this vast work. The Encyclopædia is not an Index ; but a compilation—a compendium and perfect digest of the Record—a statement of each subject, so that the manifold and intricate episodes of the war—its origin, progress and consequences, can be developed instantaneously, whether the subject relates to military matters or finance, foreign relations, State fidelity or individual patriotism, by word or deed. “Here are materials for writing a history of the Civil War,” said the New York *Evening Post*, “more accurate and circumstantial than was ever written of any war that was ever waged.” No index or file of newspapers in existence could accomplish anything of the kind or render the historian any such practical benefit.

In the Encyclopædia a history of every Regiment in the Union Army, and a large number of those in the confederate, will be found fully and impartially given—when and where raised ; how officered ; in what battles engaged ; what losses they suffered, and what amount of glory or the reverse achieved. Every list of killed, wounded, and prisoners ; of invalids in hospitals, and of those who have perished from disease, has been collated, analyzed, and as far as possible, systematized, so that the fate of each individual can be readily ascertained. As an indication of the value of these Regimental Records, the following recent letter from Mr. R. R. Knapp to Mr. Townsend, will suffice to prove their importance.

“I have to thank you for the valuable information received through your Encyclopædia regarding B. B. Kennedy, formerly of Company E, 6th U. S. Cavalry. He is suffering from a wound received in 1862, and is refused a pension because he is unable to prove that he was wounded at Slatersville. I myself, a member of his company was away on detached duty at the time, and can only testify to my knowledge and belief—others of the command are scattered, no one knows where ; the officer in command of the company at the time is out of the service, and all letters fail to reach him, and but for your valuable information—even to day and date, this man who well deserves the pension of his

Government, might die for the need of it. Again I thank you, and trust you may receive the just reward for your untiring efforts to preserve for the country such a minute and clear history of the war of the Rebellion."

The Navy, and every known ship and mariner belonging to it, meets with the same amount of minute and honorable mention. Officers and men of both branches of the public service, dead and living, privates as well as officers, whose names have received honorable mention in official reports, reports of newspaper correspondents, obituary notices, or in any other way in which the press has afforded information, have their names and deeds inscribed in that section of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA* devoted to the "Roll of Honor." The aim of the compiler has thus been to rescue from oblivion the noble deeds of the more humble, but equally meritorious, among the lower officers, and in the rank and file.

Those who have been guilty of brutal or dishonorable acts will find themselves handed down to an equal though less enviable immortality..

The subject of Privateering, including the Alabama Claims, has its special department, as well as the Blockade. Speeches, Letters, Reports, Messages, Correspondence, Proclamations, Ecclesiastical Documents, &c., from all sections of the Union, can be found as readily as a name can be found in the Directory. The Editorials of the Press are all arranged by subjects, and appear chronologically in connection with the departments of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA* to which they relate. Every State in the Union, the Territories and the Indians, and the Invasion of Mexico, have their separate divisions.

The Secret History of the Rebellion, Captured Correspondence, and new and valuable information concerning the early history of our country, will be found under the head of "Historical References," and number several thousand. The various branches of the General Government have each their special departments—Executive—Congressional—State—Treasury—War and Navy—and the same is applicable to the "Confederate Government."

As an indication of the completeness of the GOVERNMENTAL RECORDS, the following letter from the late Chief Justice Chase to Mr. Townsend will doubtless be conclusive evidence: "The voluminous abstract of matters connected with the Treasury during my administration, contained in your valuable compilation is admirably prepared, and I hope the work itself will find an appreciation which it so justly merits." An examination of the Record of the State Department and our Foreign Relations, prompted the Hon. Horatio Seymour to say: "Your RECORD is not only necessary to the historian, but it will be of great value to our Government in the event of war or hostile complications with other nations." Every general officer in the Union army as well as in the Confederate, has his individual record, where will be found all statements made publicly by him or made about him.

In short, nothing has been omitted that can afford one particle of information to whoever now or hereafter may seek to learn the history of any individual or event connected directly or indirectly with the story of our sad and sanguinary civil war, and it might be called the "Doomsday Book" of our Nation's History for the last decade.

The ENCYCLOPÆDIA, when completed, will number 25 volumes, of 1200 pages each, equal in size to the largest bank ledger; elegantly bound in Russia leather, and containing *three hundred thousand references*.

THE INDEX

to the departments of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA is comprised in one volume, and "this INDEX said the late Dr. Cogswell, the organizer and first Superintendent of the Astor Library, "renders the entire work as easy to be consulted as if it were comprised in a single volume." As the opinions of no gentleman in any country are worthier of more earnest consideration than those uttered by Dr. Cagswell, the following additional extracts from his letter in regard to the practical utility and importance of the work are respectfully submitted.

—“Its plan is excellent, and its execution, so far as I could judge from the time I was able to give to it, *faithful and thorough*. As a chronological and synchronous record it is more minute and more authentic than could be formed in any other way. The manifest labor, time and cost which must have been bestowed upon this great work warrant the inference that it will not be duplicated. With many thanks for the opportunity afforded me of inspecting this rich and truly wonderful record of the monster Rebellion, I am truly and respectfully yours,

(Signed)

JOSEPH G. COGSWELL.

After an examination of the INDEX, the Rev. Henry W. Bel-
lews wrote the following letter to Mr. Townsend :

“I have looked through the volume you were kind enough to send for my inspection with extreme admiration and amazement at the labor and pains expended upon it. Considered only as an index of the vast work you have so nearly concluded, it furnishes a worthy and beautiful portal for the magnificent temple you have built in memory of the countless events, great and small, of our late momentous civil war. Indicating the comprehensiveness, thoroughness and minuteness of your RECORD, it gives only a pregnant hint of what your ponderous monogram contains. That you should have had the courage to conceive it is less remarkable than that you have had the patience to carry it so nearly through without bating a jot of the precision of your costly plan. The beauty of the chirography is itself a tribute to the honor you pay your own work, and it deserves the shining garments in which you have clothed it. I have never seen any writing carried through so enormous a space without somewhere degenerating into carelessness ; but your last page is as fresh and comely as the first, showing an artist's love of perfection. As to the order, skill and convenience with which the INDEX is prepared, my lack of critical knowledge is the only limit to my admiration and praise. It is alarming to think that so precious a work exists only in a single copy. You have done all that is possible to make that perfect. ‘It is one, but a lion!’

“That the public may some day more fully appreciate your persistent toil and exemplary courage is my heartfelt wish and

hope; but you have your *best reward* in the service you have done your country, be it recognized or not."

"It has been a labor of love with the author," said the New York *Herald*, "for otherwise he could never have toiled on for years as he has done, without any encouragement except the knowledge of the benefit he was conferring on mankind."

Mr. Townsend has thus far devoted sixteen years of his life to this undertaking, and expended upon it as many thousand dollars of his own resources, and he very justly considers that having devoted the best part of his life to an enterprise pronounced by leading men of all parties and professions of such great national importance, that pecuniary assistance should be afforded to enable him to devote the remaining few years necessary for its completion. With this object in view, it was resolved at a meeting of prominent citizens, held at the Society Library Building, some time since, that it is in the interest of history—that great guide of humanity—that the labors so long and perseveringly carried on should be brought to a successful termination, and in aid of the accomplishment of this object, the following named gentlemen have contributed sums of \$25, \$50 and \$100 each, to promote the public interests by helping Mr. Townsend to complete the work. These gentlemen expressing in the subscription paper their appreciation of the great service he has rendered to the cause of history, and as an evidence that his fellow-citizens are not ungrateful towards those who originate and carry out enterprises resulting in a great public good."

Ex. Gov. JOHN A. DIX,
 " HORATIO SEYMOUR,
 Chief Justice S. P. CHASE,
 Gen. ALEX. S. WEBB,
 " CHARLES C. DODGE,
 " GEO. B. McCLELLAN,
 Hon. FREDERIC DE PEYSTER,
 " OSWALD OTTENDORFER,
 Mr. PETER COOPER,
 Professor S. F. B. MORSE,
 Hon. CYRUS W. FIELD,
 " A. A. LOW,
 " S. B. CHITTENDEN,
 " MARSHAL O. ROBERTS,
 " MOSES TAYLOR,
 " GEORGE OPDYKE,
 " WM. F. HAVEMEYER,
 Mr. HENRY HAVEMEYER,

Hon. C. GODFREY GUNTHER,
 Col. FRANK E. HOWE,
 Hon. WILSON G. HUNT,
 Mr. JOHN DAVID WOLFE,
 " JOHN P. TOWNSEND,
 " S. L. M. BARLOW,
 " B. H. HUTTON,
 " WM. F. CARY,
 Hon. WM. E. DODGE,
 Mr. THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
 " SAMUEL L. MITCHELL,
 Col. JOHN JACOB ASTOR,
 Mr. ADRIAN ISELIN,
 " PETER TOWNSEND,
 " EDWARD COOPER,
 " JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSON.

The names of all contributors are inscribed, on Memorial Tablets to be connected with the Library, so that the American people may know what citizens aided in the completion of this great work, "which future ages will prize as one of the chief memorials of the first century of American Independence," and the veneration with which society remembers the prominent men who in any wise aided the patriotic cause during our Revolutionary Era, clearly indicates that these Tablets will acquire increasing respect as time rolls by, in the estimation of the public, as well as of the families and descendants of the contributors.

I trust you will concur in the patriotic and generous feeling of the gentlemen above mentioned, and that you will feel disposed to unite with them in promoting the object, by sending your check to my care, made payable to the order of Mr. Thomas S. Townsend, for whatever sum it may be agreeable for you to contribute, and the same will be promptly acknowledged by the compiler.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN IRVING,

Society Library Building,
67 University Place, New York.

Collins

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



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